



**United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument
190 E. Center Street Kanab, Utah 84741**



**For Immediate Release
October 6, 2005**

**Contact: Larry Crutchfield
435-644-4310**

Temporary Restrictions announced

The Bureau of Land Management announced a temporary restriction of firewood-gathering in the southern portion of the Buckskin Mountain area effective October 15, 2005, through April 30, 2006. The restriction is needed to ensure public safety during fuels reduction operations being conducted to reduce wildfire potential in the area and improve wildlife habitat. Maps detailing the boundary of the affected area can be obtained from any BLM office or BLM Visitors Center.

Firewood gathering, post cutting and Christmas tree cutting is allowed by permit on Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in the Rock Springs Bench and Buckskin Mountain areas. New and current permittees will need to comply with the temporary restriction, which impacts about a third of the authorized collection area on the Buckskin unit. The Rock Springs Bench wood cutting area is not affected by this temporary restriction.

Buckskin Mountain was chosen for fuels reduction because it is heavily wooded with very little shrub understory. When trees become dense in pinyon-juniper woodland, they compete with the shrubs, grasses and forbs, eventually killing the understory, leaving mostly bare ground. These shrubs, such as cliffrose, grasses and forbs (broadleaf plants) provide food for many wildlife species.

The dense trees, plus the dead and down trees in the area, also provide plenty of fuel for fire. Several high-intensity stand-replacing wildfires have occurred within the Buckskin Mountain area. The most recent fires involved approximately 300 acres in 1996, 350 acres in 1997 and 1,110 acres in 1998. The resulting vegetation in these areas is predominantly cheatgrass, a non-native grass, and is not considered to be quality wildlife habitat or livestock forage. Thinning the dense woodland in a mosaic pattern will break up the great expanse of potential fuel for a wildfire, and reduce the probability of large wildfires in the area.

The restoration project, a joint effort of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, and the Bureau of Land Management, also includes reseeded parts of the area with native seed.

According to Melissa Siders, BLM wildlife biologist, “The goal is to get native vegetation back to a healthy state and balance, which in turn reduces wildfire potential and improves wildlife habitat and livestock forage.”